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WALTHAM HOLY CROSS URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and

SANITARY INSPECTOR

for the year

1937

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WALTHAM HOLY CROSS URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

To the Chairman and Members of the
Waltham Holy Cross Urban District Council.

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1937 in the form prescribed by the Ministry of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

Medical Officer of Health:

L. S. FRY, M.D.Camb. D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector:

J. W. MEDLEY, M.S.I.A.
(Diplomas for Meat and Food Inspection).

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area in acres	10,959
Registrar-General's estimate of resident population mid-year 1937... ...	7,098
Number of inhabited houses end of 1937 according to Rate Book	1,984
Rateable Value	£48 317
Sum represented by a penny rate ...	£178

Vital Statistics.

		Male	Female	Total
Live Births	Legitimate ...	58	44	105
	Illegitimate ...	3	—	
Birth rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population ...				14.7
Still Births		3	—	3
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births				27.0
Deaths		46	38	84
Crude death rate ...	11.8 per 1,000 of population.			
Corrected death rate	11.4 „ „ „ „			

Deaths from puerperal causes:—

		Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births
Puerperal sepsis	0	0
Other Puerperal causes	0	18.5

Death rate of infants under 1 year of age:	
All infants per 1,000 live births ...	47
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	49
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	0
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	8
Deaths from Measles (all ages) ...	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age)	2

It will be seen that according to the Registrar-General's estimate the population of the district has increased by 126 since the mid-year of 1936.

There was a slight fall in the birth rate and a small increase in the death rate as compared with the figures for 1936.

It is satisfactory to note that the infantile mortality rate fell from 57 to 47 per 1,000 live births.

There was no unusual or excessive mortality during the year, nor is their any evidence that the occupations or environment of the inhabitants of the district exert any prejudicial effect on health.

Social Conditions of the Area.

Unlike so many places near London, Waltham Abbey is not a dormitory town and is relatively little affected by the restless rhythm of suburban life with its constant ebb and flow to and from the Metropolis.

Most of the inhabitants earn their living in one of the local factories, whilst those in the rural part of

the district are occupied mainly in the glasshouse culture of tomatoes, cucumbers or mushrooms, or in dairy farming.

The industries of the district include the Royal Gunpowder Factory employing at present upwards of 2,000 men, and factories for the manufacture of racquets, chemical fertilisers, "Catalin" and hosiery, the last two established during the past year or eighteen months.

There is virtually no unemployment in the district at the present time.

Physical Training and Recreation Act.

In November of the year under review, a public meeting was held with the object of explaining and at the same time gauging public opinion as to the desirability of implementing this Act in the district. At the same time an Advisory Committee was set up to consider the needs of the district, with special reference to additional playing fields, a swimming pool, and the organisation of "Keep Fit" classes and other indoor recreations.

There is little doubt of the need, to a greater or lesser degree, of all these things, and it is ardently to be hoped that the labours of the Committee will bear fruit in due course.

At the same time, it is important not to lose sight of those other essential ingredients of health, good housing, enough of the right kind of food, adequate rest and leisure, and employment suited to the individual, lest we delude ourselves into thinking

that games and exercise alone will produce the healthy mind in a healthy body which should be our goal.

Moreover, if the maximum benefits are to be derived from the Act, the net must be widely spread and opportunities offered to suit individual taste and inclination. Many will cycle or walk who abhor physical jerks; others prefer folk dancing or indoor games, such as badminton, to gymnastics; swimming appeals to many who have no time or aptitude for cricket or tennis.

But with patience and communal effort it should be possible, in the next year or two, greatly to increase the opportunities for healthy recreation of all kinds in the district.

Camping.

The increase in week-end camps in the district duriug the summer months has been referred to in previous reports.

With the coming into force of the the Public Health Act, 1936, owners of camping grounds occupied for a specified period must obtain a licence from the Local Authority before letting their land for this purpose.

Adequate powers are now given under this Act to secure the provision and maintenance of a reasonable standard of sanitation in camps, with control also of the number of tents or moveable buildings on any particular site. These powers will be exercised during the coming summer.

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

(a) Laboratory Facilities.

No change.

The number of specimens from the district examined at the Counties Public Health Laboratory was as follows:—

Diphtheria	366
Sputa	5
Typhoid	40
Ringworm	—
General	52
Milk	—
Ice Cream	—
Water	—
Sewage	—
Total	463

Biological examinations

for virulence test ...	—
for Tubercle Bacilli	—

These figures include the examinations made for the Waltham Joint Hospital.

(b) Ambulance.

In spite of negotiations with neighbouring Authorities, the Council has failed up to the

present to come to any agreement for reciprocal ambulance arrangements.

(c) Nursing in the Home.

One additional Midwife was appointed by the County Council for domiciliary service in the district.

(d) Clinics and Treatment Centres.

No change.

(e) Hospitals.

No change.

(For Waltham Joint Hospital, see page 23).

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

1. (i) Water.

The Metropolitan Water Board supplies practically the whole of the area with water from deep wells in Lea Road and Rammey Marsh, Waltham Abbey. The supply of water is ample, the quality good, and the supply constant.

The supply of water from springs to certain farms and houses in the outlying parts of the area depend to a great extent on the rainfall.

(ii) Drainage and Sewerage.

The urban part of the area and the rural parts of Upshire and High Beech are provided with sewers with outfall to the Town Sewage Works.

Sewardstone and Sewardstonebury are provided with sewage works at which the sewage is dealt with by septic tanks, filters, and irrigation, the effluent discharging into tributaries of the River Lea.

2. Rivers and Streams.

The River Lea and Cobbins Brook flow through the district. These are under the control of the Lee Conservancy Board. No action has been necessary by the District Council.

3. (i) Closet Accommodation.

Houses in the urban portion of the area and on the line of the sewers in the rural area are provided with water closets. Isolated premises have water closets connected to cesspools, or earth closets.

Number of houses with privies ...	5
,, ,, ,, ,, pail closets...	122
,, ,, ,, ,, water closets	1,927

(ii) Public Cleansing.

The collection of house refuse has been extended to the High Beech area. Otherwise the refuse collection and disposal, cesspool cleansing, etc., are the same as last year.

(iii) Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

NUISANCE INSPECTION:

Number of inspections made in 1937 ...	656
Number of nuisances in hand at close of 1936	3

Number of nuisances in hand at close of 1937	20
Number of nuisances found in 1937 ...	357
Number of nuisances abated in 1937	340
Number of informal notices served ...	135
Number of statutory notices served ...	8
Number of statutory notices complied with	6
Number of summonses or other legal proceedings	Nil

DISINFECTION:

Number of visits re cleansing and disinfection of premises after cases of infectious disease	21

PETROLEUM ACTS

Number of licences granted	31
,, ,, inspections of premises ...	48

RATS AND MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919:

The Sanitary Inspector is the Officer appointed under the Order. Forty-three inspections of premises have been made during the year and instructions given to deal with the nuisance under varying conditions. The Council have undertaken to supply free small quantities of rat poison to householders in necessitous cases.

The Ministry's Memorandum on suggestions for rat destruction was circu-

lated to 106 persons occupying farms, dog kennels, piggeries, slaughter-houses and corn stores, tomato and cucumber nurseries.

Miscellaneous Inspections :

Visits to works in progress	143
Appointments, visits re non-abatement of nuisances and other causes ...	162
Visits re cleansing of cesspools ...	18
Number of inspections of camping grounds	10

Ice Cream Regulations under Essex County Council Act, 1933.

Number of persons registered as manufacturers and vendors ...	10
Number of persons registered as vendors	14
Number of inspections of premises ...	25

(iv) Shops.

Action has been necessary in one instance only, with regard to sanitary conveniences.

(v) Smoke Abatement.

No action has been necessary for the abatement of nuisances from smoke in the area. Number of observations taken— nine.

(vi) Swimming Baths and Pools.

(a) Public— none.

(b) Privately owned—There are two swimming pools in the district:—(1) at the King's Oak Hotel, High Beech—filtering and chlorinating plant installed.

(2) Gilwell Park Scouts Camp—water changed fortnightly and chlorinated.

Number of inspections—seven.

Two samples of water taken from pools were found to be satisfactory.

(vii) Eradication of Bed Bugs.

(i) Council houses found to be infested—none.
Other houses found to be infested—two.
Other houses disinfested—two.

(ii) By the use of Sulphur and Cimex blocks.

(iii) Nil.

(iv) Nil.

4. Schools.

There are four public elementary schools in the area and inspections are made of their sanitary condition. Their water supply is satisfactory, but in the case of one of them, the washing accommodation leaves much room for improvement, inasmuch as six small wash-basins for 265 boys cannot be considered adequate as judged by modern standards of hygiene.

Cases of infectious disease are investigated and absentees visited as far as possible.

Number of inspections of schools—11.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year :—

(1)	(a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ...	193
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	332
(2)	(a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	90
	(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	221
(3)		Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	6
(4)		Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	72

2. Remedy of Defects during the Year without Service of formal Notices :—

		Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	82

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year:—

(a).—Proceedings under sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 6

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:—

(a) By owners 3

(b) By local authority in default of owners Nil

(b).—Proceedings under Public Health Acts:

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 6

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—

(a) By owners 6

(b) By local authority in default of owners Nil

(c).—Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 1

(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... 1

(d).—Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:

(1)	Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ...	Nil
(2)	Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	Nil

4. Housing Act, 1936—Overcrowding.

(a)	(i)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of year	20
	(ii)	Number of families dwelling therein ...	20
	(iii)	Number of persons dwelling therein ...	144
(b)		Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c)	(i)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	8
	(ii)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	67
(d)		Number of cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	Nil
		Total number of houses measured up for the purpose of issuing a certificate of the permitted number of persons on the application of the owner of the house	226

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Milk Supply.

All premises where milk is produced, handled or stored are visited regularly and strict supervision is exercised to ensure the clean production and proper handling of the milk.

Number of cowkeepers on the register	22
Number of milksellers who are also cowkeepers	9
Number of milksellers who are purveyors only	7
Number of inspections in 1937 ...	200
Approximate number of milch cows ...	501

Tuberculin tested milk is produced at two farms.

Accredited milk is produced at eleven farms.

Supplementary licences for the sale of milk under the Milk (Special Designations) Order, 1936, were granted as follows:—

2 to sell milk as Tuberculin Tested.
1 „ „ „ „ Accredited.
4 „ „ „ „ Pasteurised.

Informal notices have been served with reference to limewashing sheds, dirty stools, floors, and the flanks of cows in seventeen cases.

During the year four cowkeepers have ceased to produce milk for sale.

Essex County Council Scheme:

Number of samples of milk obtained from producers or dealers in the district and examined biologically		20
	Negative	17
	Positive	3
Number of samples of milk obtained from producers in the district and examined by the Methylene Blue Reduction Test		34
	Satisfactory	27
	Unsatisfactory	7

Meat and Other Foods.

A Cattle Market and General Market are held at Waltham Abbey on Tuesdays where the sale of food is supervised.

The sanitary condition of all premises where food is prepared, stored or exposed for sale is satisfactory.

There are four slaughterhouses in the district; two are registered and two are licensed. Regular inspections are made at the times of slaughter of animals and the number of visits paid was 255.

Number of inspections of the Market—93.

Number of inspections of a Cooked Meat Factory—86.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (if known)	—	—	—	—	—
Number Inspected	296	3	249	386	1814
ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS.					
Whole carcases condemned	—	—	1	1	3
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	12	—	1	—	29
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	4.05	—	0.8	0.26	1.76
TUBERCULOSIS ONLY.					
Whole carcases condemned	—	—	—	—	1
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	1	—	—	—	67
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	0.34	—	—	—	3.75

There are fifteen slaughtermen licensed under the provisions of the Slaughter of Animals Act, 1933.

Sale of Food and Drugs Act, etc.

These are under the control of the Essex County Council.

Chemical and Bacteriological Examination of Food.

This is carried out when necessary by the County Authorities.

TABLE.

1.—INSPECTION OF FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

INCLUDING ISPECTIONS MADE BY THE SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Premises	Number of		
	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories (including Factory Laundries)	13	1	None
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries)	51	4	None
Workplaces (other than Outworkers' Premises ...	None	None	None
Totals	64	5	None

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars	Number of Defects			Number of Prosecutions
	Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :—				
Want of Cleanliness	2	2	None	None
Want of Ventilation	None	None	None	None
Sanitary accommodation unsuitable or defective ...	1	1	None	None
Other Nuisances	2	2	None	None
Offences under the Factory and Workshops Acts	None	None	None	None
Totals	5	5	None	None

SECTION F.

Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious Disease.

The incidence of notifiable infectious disease was remarkably low throughout the year.

Ten cases only of Scarlet Fever were notified, the lowest number for many years.

Diphtheria.

Five cases were notified, two of these from a Sanatorium in the district; there was one death, that of a child who developed the disease a few days after arriving in the district on a visit.

Immunisation.

Twenty-six children were immunised by practitioners during the year. A summary of the work done under the scheme is given below.

	Cases
Schick negative after two doses of Alum Toxoid	11
Two doses of Alum Toxoid but not due for Schick test	8
Schick negative after one dose of Alum Toxoid	6
One dose of Alum Toxoid but not Schick tested	1
	26

Carried over from previous year, *i.e.* immunised in 1936 and Schick-tested in 1937		14
Total cases treated	...	40

Isolation Hospital.

The facilities provided at the Waltham Joint Hospital for the admission of cases of non-notifiable infectious disease requiring hospital treatment were in operation throughout the year.

Four cases of whooping cough, three of measles, and two of mumps were admitted under the new arrangement.

Since July, cases also of Puerperal pyrexia and Ophthalmia Neonatorum have been admitted to this Hospital.

Measles Serum.

A small stock of Measles convalescent serum is kept in a refrigerator at the Town Hall, Chingford, for use by practitioners in Chingford and Waltham Abbey. The blood from which this serum was prepared was collected from patients in both districts.

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1937.

	Total cases notified	Cases admitted to hospital	Total deaths
Scarlet Fever	10	10	0
Diphtheria	5	5	1*
Paratyphoid Fever ...	1	1	0
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	2	0	0
Pneumonia	3	0	0

* Non-resident transferable death.

Analysis of Cases of Notifiable Infectious Diseases in Age Groups, 1937.

	Under 1 year	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 and upwards
Scarlet Fever	—	1	1	—	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	1	2	1	—	—	1	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	1
Paratyphoid Fever ...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Notifiable Diseases during the last five years.

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Scarlet Fever ...	21	41	15	20	10
Diphtheria	0	7	3	2	5
Typhoid & Paratyphoid	0	0	1	0	1
Pneumonia	29	26	6	3	3
Erysipelas	9	7	1	4	0
Puerperal Fever and Pyrexia	2	0	1	1	2

Tuberculosis.

New Cases and Mortality during 1937.

Age Period	New cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0—1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
5—15	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
15—25	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
25—35	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	—
45—55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
65—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	1	3	1	3	2	—	—	—

No action was taken under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925, or under Section 62 of the Public Health Act, 1925.

Prevention of Bliudness.

No action was taken under Section 66 of the Public Health Act, 1925.

APPENDIX.

Birth-rates, Death-rates, Analysis of Mortality, Maternal Death Rates, and Case-rates for certain Infectious Diseases in the year 1937.

(England and Wales, London, 125 Great Towns and 148 Smaller Towns).
(Provisional Figures based on Weekly and Quarterly Returns).

	England and Wales	125 County Boro's and Great Towns including London	148 Smaller Towns (Resident Populations 25,000 to 50,000 at 1931 Census)	London Adminstrative County	Waltham Abbey
	Rates per 1,000 Population.				
Births :—					
Live	14·9	14·9	15·3	13·3	14·7
Still	0·60	0·67	0·64	0·54	0·42
Deaths :—					
All Causes	12·4	12·5	11·9	12·3	11·4
Typhoid and Paratyphoid fevers ..	0·00	0·01	0·00	0·00	0·00
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	
Measles	0·02	0·03	0·02	0·01	—
Scarlet fever	0·01	0·01	0·01	0·01	—
Whooping Cough ..	0·04	0·04	0·03	0·06	—
Diphtheria	0 07	0·08	0·05	0·05	—
Influenza	0·45	0·39	0·42	0·38	0·42
Violence	0·54	0·45	0·42	0·51	0·98
Notifications : —					
Smallpox .. .	0·00	—	0·00	—	—
Scarlet fever	2·33	2·56	2·42	2·09	1·40
Diphtheria	1·49	1·81	1·38	1·93	0·70
Enteric fever	0·05	0·06	0·04	0·05	0·14
Erysipelas	0·37	0·43	0.34	0·44	—
Pneumonia	1·36	1·58	1·20	1·18	0·42
	Rates per 1,000 Live Births.				
Deaths under one year of age	58	62	55	60	49
Deaths from Diarrhœa and Enteritis under 2 years of age	5·8	7·9	3·2	12·0	0·14
Maternal Mortality .—					
Puerperal Sepsis ..	0·97				
Others	2·26	Not available			
Total	3·23				
	Rates per 1,000 Total Births (i.e. Live and Still).				
Maternal Mortality :—					
Puerperal Sepsis ..	0·94				0·0
Others	2·17	Not available			18·5
Total	3·11				18·5
Notifications :—					
Puerperal fever ..	13·93	17·59	11·52	4·15	
Puerperal pyrexia ..				14·34	18.5

In conclusion, I take this opportunity of thanking the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Medley, for his loyal co-operation during the year, and acknowledging also the consideration and support I have received from the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee.

Yours obediently,

L. S. FRY,

Medical Officer of Health.